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Written Testimony of Christopher Phelps  
Environment Connecticut Program Director

Before the Connecticut General Assembly Commerce Committee

Monday, February 22, 2010

**Opposing Raised Senate Bill 174, An Act Concerning The Standards Of Water Quality**

Senator LeBeau, Representative Berger, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of Environment Connecticut, I am submitting this testimony **Opposing Raised Senate Bill 174**. This bill would severely undermine the ability of the State of Connecticut to comply with the Clean Water Act (CWA). The Department of Environmental Protection is required under the CWA to conduct public hearings, review, modify and update water quality standards at least once every three years. However, it has been a decade since DEP updated its current standards.

The state's failure to comply with the CWA requirement to regularly review and update water quality standards resulted in the filing of a federal suit. Shortly thereafter, DEP announced it was proceeding to conduct the required review of water quality standards. Raised Senate Bill 174 would set back that process considerably and make it very difficult for DEP to comply with the CWA.

The existing DEP process for reviewing and amending water quality standards allows for significant public participation. Raised Senate Bill 174 would throw a roadblock in the path of the currently active DEP review of water quality standards. It would further create roadblocks to future DEP reviews that the agency is required to conduct. In so doing, this bill would unnecessarily burden DEP's already over-extended resources, creating a potentially significant new fiscal burden for the department.

By making it more difficult, time consuming and expensive for the DEP to comply with the Clean Water Act, this legislation undermines the agency's ability to effectively enforce this law and ensure that Connecticut's waterways are clean, safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Christopher Phelps  
Program Director  
Environment Connecticut

*Environment Connecticut is a non-profit, member-supported environmental advocacy organization working for clean air, clean water and open spaces.*

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